

23 February 1961

Mr. William McAfee  
Deputy Director, INR/C3  
Department of State  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Bill:

I have recently concurred in the position taken by Don McCue and you with respect to dropping the Regional Publication Officer (RPO) position at New Delhi. One of the major factors cited by both of you in reaching that position was the limited expenditure of funds by the several Federal agencies in the program to acquire Indian publications through the RPO there. A second point made was the feasibility of putting the RPO function under the geographic attache at the Embassy, a situation analogous to the combined publications and map operations at Embassy Tokyo. The fact that the New Delhi Foreign Service local, Mr. Krishnamurthi, has been performing very well for several years as the PO's assistant was noted as an additional factor to be considered.

I suggest that this reduction of the total strength of RPO's, currently numbering eight, should put the Department in a better position to assign additional RPO positions at other posts warranting the assignment. As you are well aware, the USIB Committee on Procurement of Foreign Publications, as well as its predecessor committees, have for several years urged that additional RPO positions be established at strategic posts throughout the world. Southeast Asia and Southeast Europe, for example, have been suggested as appropriate areas in which RPO's might be assigned. Other areas have also been suggested.


This seems like a good time to conduct a post mortem on the RPO position at New Delhi, with reference particularly to the very recent past. I do not believe that the New Delhi operation, now admittedly weak in comparison with other RPO posts, should have become or, in fact, would ever have been

- 2 -

weak, had the job been performed with vigor. I remember that LeRoy Makepeace did a splendid job there, as did Judith Laikin and Harry Stritman. It is a fact that the interest taken in the publications of an area by the several Federal agencies in Washington is largely dependent upon what those agencies know about the publications of that area which they may order. In a country such as India, where national or local state bibliographies, if published, are usually far out-of-date when printed, the RPO becomes the prime source for assessing Indian publications and the publishing industry in general. Travel to the principal publishing centers is of course requisite in carrying out the PO function -- it is noteworthy that in this regard the last New Delhi PO visited Calcutta, the principal publishing center of India only once. This matter of reporting on what is published, where, on what subject, at what cost (if priced), and how it may be obtained, is indeed the heart of the RPO's job and calls for individuals who not only have the requisite reporting capability, but who are equally interested in the job from a career point of view. Thus we return once again to our plea that individual motivation, experience, and linguistic ability be considered among the minimal qualifications rigorously required in any future RPO assignment.

Sincerely,

25X1A9a

  
Chairman, Committee on Procurement  
of  
Foreign Publications